



Delaware Health and Social Services

Department of Health and Social Services

Division of Medicaid & Medical Assistance

Pathways to Employment

The Employment First Act — Putting Policy into Practice

Forging a path so that all citizens have an equal opportunity to lead independent and productive lives.

February 2014



Background: The Employment First Act — Putting Policy into Practice

- Governor Markell has made employment for individuals with disabilities a high priority.
- In the Summer of 2012, Governor Markell signed the Employment First Act, HB 319.
- This important legislation:
 - Declares that competitive employment in an integrated setting will be the first and priority option when offering or providing services to individuals with disabilities of working age.
 - Raises the expectation for all State agencies to collaborate and to ensure that individuals have additional choices related to work when they are seeking services and supports.



Background: A Better Bottom Line

- In addition to the work within the State to expand options for employment for individuals with disabilities, Governor Markell launched an initiative in his role as Chair of the National Governor's Association to help other states improve employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities and to support businesses and state government to find skilled workers.
- This initiative, **A Better Bottom Line: Employing People with Disabilities**, provides tangible steps state leaders can take to improve employment outcomes and create more employment opportunities for people with disabilities.



Background: Economic Security for Delawareans Makes Good Economic Sense

- Delaware is emerging as a national leader in strategies to enable personal economic stability and opportunities for employment. A few efforts contributing to this success include:
 - Delaware's successful private/public partnership for the \$tand By Me Program — assisting Delawareans to understand and manage their finances in order to increase their financial stability and future economic opportunities.
 - The Department of Health and Social Services has partnered with the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, Department of Education, and others to begin employment planning early to ensure a strong return on investment for education.
 - A cross-agency effort to develop the ***Pathways to Employment*** program — providing key employment supports for individuals age 14 to 25 with disabilities.
 - In addition to the Pathways Program, Delaware's Division of Substance Abuse and Mental Health is developing a comprehensive program, entitled PROMISE, to provide community-based services for individuals age 18 and older with mental illness and substance use needs, including the same types of important employment related services being offered through Pathways.



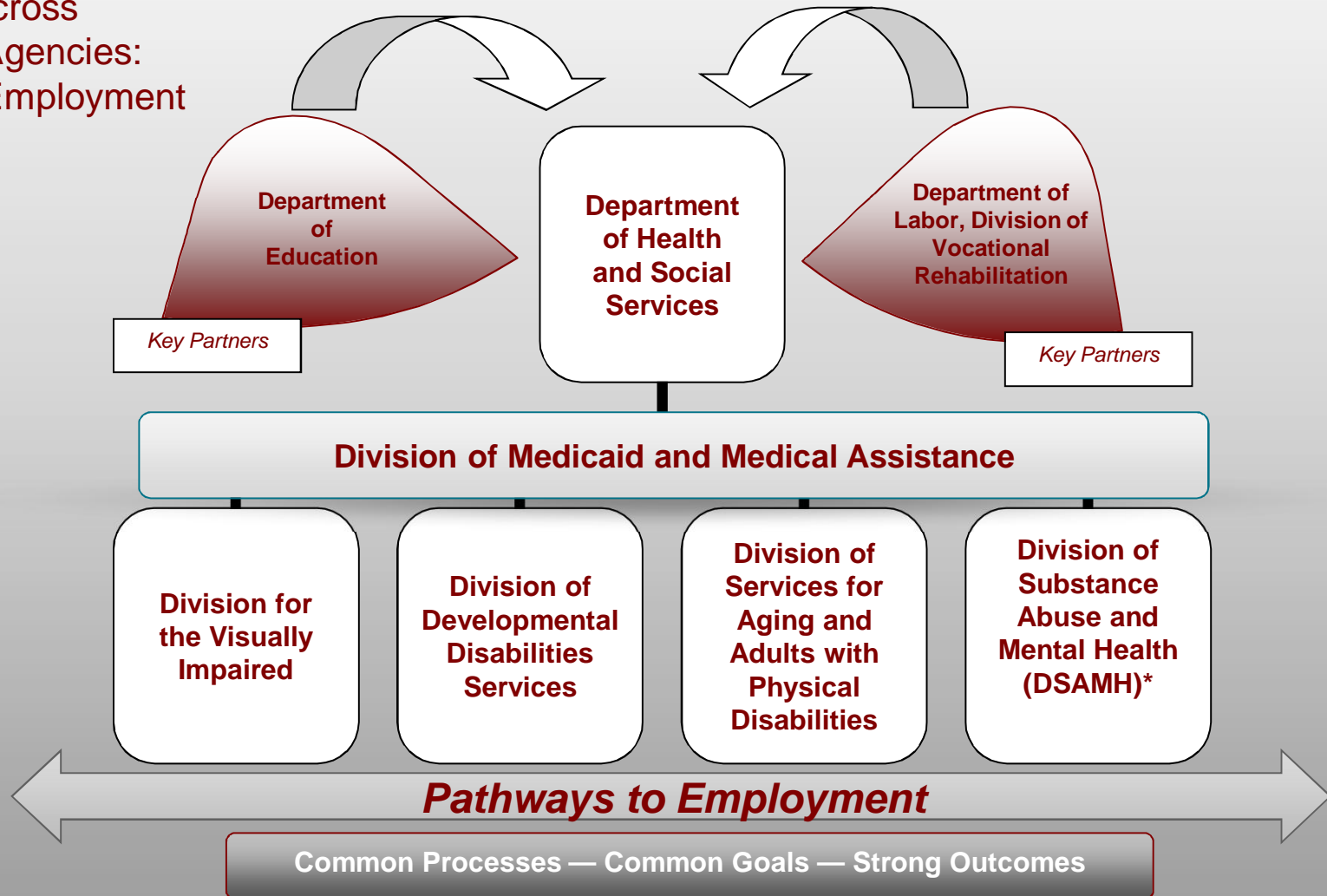
Pathways to Employment

- Utilizing options available through the Medicaid program to expand available community resources and services to eligible persons, Delaware is developing the ***Pathways to Employment*** program to provide greater options for individuals with disabilities to gain supports for employment.
- This program will:
 - Serve low income individuals age 14 to 25, across disabilities, who have a desire to work in a competitive work environment.
 - Provide individually tailored services for individuals with visual impairments, physical disabilities, intellectual disabilities, autism spectrum disorder and Aspergers. Individuals with mental health support needs will receive similar services through a different, comprehensive Medicaid authority.
 - Offer an array of services such as career exploration, on the job supports, transportation, personal care, orientation and mobility training, assistive technology, and other services to help individuals gain and maintain employment based on their specific needs and tailored to their interests.
 - Stretch limited State dollars by partnering with the federal government, increasing individual independence, and strengthening the State's workforce.
 - Provide a strong foundation for Delaware's ongoing efforts to ensure that transition aged individuals with disabilities have a clear path to employment.



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Partnership Across Government Agencies: Pathways to Employment



*DSAMH will operate their employment supports through a separate Medicaid authority supporting all aspects of community living, including employment, but the principles of Employment First and the supports available will be similar. This program is called the PROMISE program



Pathways to Employment Program Highlights

- ***Pathways to Employment*** will utilize a Medicaid authority called 1915(i), home- and community-based services (HCBS) State Plan Option.
- Pathways will serve individuals age 14 to 25, who are Medicaid eligible, and will focus on the following target groups:
 - Individual with visual impairments.
 - Individuals with physical disabilities, which may include individuals with brain injury.
 - Individuals with intellectual disabilities, individuals with autism spectrum disorder and individuals with Aspergers



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Pathways to Employment Program Highlights - Eligibility

- To be eligible for the program, individuals must:
 - Be age 14 to 25
 - Be Medicaid eligible and meet certain financial eligibility criteria;
 - Want to work;
 - Be in one of the identified target groups; and
 - Meet certain needs-based criteria.



Pathways to Employment Program Highlights (cont'd)

- Pathways will provide a seamless transition from school into adulthood, ensuring that investments in education are not lost and providing tools for ongoing supports when individuals have completed school and services available through vocational rehabilitation.
- In most situations, the Pathways benefit may begin as early as age 14 to provide a bridge from high school to college and/or career. As a Medicaid program, Pathways will provide services only after services through school and vocational rehabilitation have been fully utilized.
- Pathways will offer a centralized approach to accessing services, with strong links to make sure there is no wrong door to gain access.



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Pathways to Employment Services and Supports

**Employment
Navigator**

**Career
Exploration
and Assessment**

**Supported
Employment
– Individual**

**Supported
Employment
– Small Group**

Pathways will also offer services to provide key supports to enable individuals to be successful in employment situations:

**Benefits
Counselling**

**Financial
Coaching**

**Non-Medical
Transportation**

**Personal
Care
(including
self-directed
option)**

**Orientation,
Mobility,
Assistive
Technology**

Service availability may vary based upon target group, and other available resources.



Pathways to Employment Services and Supports



- Employment Navigators assist participants in gaining access to needed employment and related supports. This service ensures coordination between employment and related supports and other State plan services, as well as medical, social, educational, and other services, regardless of the funding source for the services to which access is gained.
- This service will be provided by state staff.



Pathways to Employment Services and Supports



- Career exploration and assessment will help individuals identify a career direction and develop a plan for achieving competitive, integrated employment at or above the State's minimum wage. The outcome of this service will be documentation of the participant's stated career objective and a career plan, including any necessary education (such as college) and training, used to guide individual employment support.
- This service will be time limited to make sure individuals can get moving toward their employment goals.



Pathways to Employment Services and Supports

A graphic element consisting of a red arrow pointing to the right, with a white outline. Inside the arrow, the text "Supported Employment – Individual" is written in white.

Supported Employment – Individual

- Supported employment — individual services will be one-on-one supports to obtain and maintain an individual job in competitive or customized employment, or self-employment, in an integrated work setting in the general workforce. Individuals receiving this service will have jobs that are compensated at or above the minimum wage, but not less than the customary wage and level of benefits paid by the employer for the same or similar work performed by individuals without disabilities.



Pathways to Employment Services and Supports

A graphic consisting of a red arrow pointing to the right, with a white-to-red gradient. The text "Supported Employment – Small Group" is written in black inside the arrow.

Supported Employment – Small Group

- Supported employment — small group will be services and training activities provided in regular business, industry, and community settings for groups of two to four workers with disabilities.
- Small group employment support will not include vocational services provided in facility based work settings, enclaves or other non-competitive or non-integrated job placements.
- Supported employment — small group will emphasize the importance of a rapid job search for a competitive job and provides work experiences where the consumer can develop strengths and skills.
- Short-term small group supported employment supports will not be a pre-requisite for individualized, integrated supported employment under supported employment — individual.



Pathways to Employment Services and Supports



- Benefits counseling will provide information to individuals regarding available benefits and assist individuals to understand options for making an informed choice about going to work with full understanding of the impact it will have on benefits.
- This service will assist individuals to understand the work incentives and support programs available and the impact of work activity on their benefits. This service will help individuals to understand not only their benefits supports, but also how to utilize work incentives and other tools to assist them to achieve self-sufficiency through work.



Pathways to Employment Services and Supports



- Pathways will use the successful **\$tand By Me** model to deliver financial coaching services. Financial coaching will include a personal financial coach and a toolkit to navigate the challenges leading to personal financial security. The service goal is to increase the capacity of individuals served through Pathways to understand and manage their finances in order to increase their financial stability and future economic opportunities.



Pathways to Employment Services and Supports

A graphic of a red arrow pointing right, with the text "Non-Medical Transportation" inside it.

Non-Medical Transportation

- Non-medical transportation will be available to enable waiver participants to gain access to employment services, activities, and resources. This service will be offered in addition to medical transportation under the State Plan and does not replace it.
- Whenever possible, family, neighbors, friends, carpools, ride share with co-workers or community agencies, which can provide this service without charge, must be utilized.
- The service will only be available when the individual has no other means to get to work, and the individual must use the most inexpensive means of transportation available.



Pathways to Employment Services and Supports



- Personal care will include assistance with activities of daily living (bathing, dressing, personal hygiene, transferring, toileting, skin care, eating, and assisting with mobility), as needed to assist an individual in the workplace. Personal care may also provide stand-by assistance in the workplace to individuals who may require support on an intermittent basis due to a disability or medical condition.
- This service is also intended to provide personal care for individuals in getting to and from work.
- Individuals enrolled in Diamond State Health Plan Plus will receive personal care through the Plus program, with Pathways providing only those necessary services over and above those available through that program.
- A self-directed personal care option will be available for individuals who need personal care related to their employment.



Pathways to Employment Services and Supports

A graphic element consisting of a white arrow pointing right, with a red outline and a red-to-white gradient fill. Inside the arrow, the text "Orientation, Mobility and Assistive Technology" is written in red.

Orientation, Mobility and Assistive Technology

- Orientation and mobility will provide training to individuals to develop the necessary skills to travel independently and safely. This will be accomplished on a one-on-one basis, with the usage of white canes, guide dogs, or other equipment.
- Assistive technology service will be a service that directly assists a participant in the selection, acquisition, or use of an assistive technology device to increase independence in the workplace. This service will provide for the purchase of a needed item (and assessments), within specified limits.



Pathways to Employment

Person-Centered Approach to Services

- There is no one-size fits all job.
- Individuals in ***Pathways to Employment*** will have the key voice, with support as needed, in directing their planning and service delivery and will indicate who they want to be involved.
- The person-centered planning process itself will:
 - Be timely and occur at times and locations convenient to the individual.
 - Reflect cultural considerations of the individual.
 - Include strategies for solving conflict or disagreement within the process, including clear conflict of interest guidelines for all planning participants.
 - Offer choices to the individual regarding the services and supports they receive and from whom.
 - Include a method for the individual to request updates to the plan.
- Success will be measured against individual goals for work.



Pathways to Employment **Measuring Success and Quality**

- Delaware is developing the quality strategy for ***Pathways for Employment***, to make sure that the services delivered are having positive results.
- Building upon existing quality efforts, Pathways' oversight strategies will include lessons learned from other HCBS programs.
- A key element of quality will be making sure that Delaware is making progress in supporting people age 14 to 25 to obtain real jobs.



Pathways to Employment **The Importance of Partnership**

- Partnership across the State and between the State and federal government is key.
- The Pathways program will continue to work collaboratively across divisions, across disabilities and within our partnerships at the State level to ensure consistent quality and expectations across our programs.



Pathways to Employment

Pathways to Employment is an important first step on an ongoing journey to improve employment opportunities for all Delawareans with disabilities.



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For more information visit

<http://www.dhss.delaware.gov/dsaapd/pathways.html>

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